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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANJUL 000190

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DAKAR PASS RAO, DAO, AND ODC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [GA](#)

SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: POSSIBLE SENEGALESE ANGLE IN TELEVISED
CONFESSIONS BY SUSPECTED COUP PLOTTERS

REF: A. BANJUL 188 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. BANJUL 177

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4 (B AND D)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) On March 27, Amcit (dual national) Tamsir Jasseh and other suspects in the aborted March 21 coup attempt gave televised confessions of their involvement, and Jasseh's role, judging from his statement, was greater than he had previously indicated to Ambassador. The statements by Jasseh and others contain suggestions of Senegalese involvement, although we are not aware of a "smoking gun" in this regard.
END SUMMARY.

TELEVISED CONFESSIONS BY DETAINED SUSPECTS

[1](#)2. (SBU) The evening of March 27, The Gambia's national television service (GRTS) ran footage of statements by various persons suspected of participation in the aborted coup attempt here March 21 (reftels) Following are highlights of some of these statements, in which the suspects confess their involvement. (We will report further when full transcript of the statements are available.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) The first to appear in the footage was Amcit (dual U.S.-Gambian national), Tamsir Jasseh, who recounted in detail his contacts with the ringleader in the coup plot, then Chief of Defense Staff Lt Col Ndure Cham. Jasseh, who indicated that he had been well aware of Cham's plotting, stated that the latter had assured him of widespread support within the armed forces for the planned coup. Jasseh confessed to facilitating Cham's escape when the coup attempt was aborted March 21, saying he (Jasseh), using his personal vehicle, had taken Cham to Kujubeh, located in Senegal's Casamance region, and then returned to Banjul.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Jasseh recounted that he, accompanied by his family, had come to the Ambassador's residence the evening of March 21, following the collapse of the coup plot, and that Ambassador had advised him to return home and cooperate with authorities. (COMMENT: Per ref b, in his discussion with Ambassador, Jasseh expressed concern for his and his family's safety, agreeing to return home when Ambassador advised him to do so based on Interior Minister's assurances that his rights in any investigation would be respected and that he

was not a primary suspect at that juncture. Judging from his televised statement, Jasseh's involvement in the plot was considerably greater than earlier indicated to the Ambassador; Jasseh had previously denied actively participating in the plot.

A SENEGALESE ANGLE?

15. (SBU) The suggestion of a Senegalese angle surfaced in the statements by Jasseh and others. Jasseh spoke of meeting with the Senegalese Ambassador here, Ndiouga Ndiaye, at Cham's request, to discuss the imperative of cooperation between the Gambian and Senegalese security services despite bilateral "political issues." (COMMENT: Jasseh gave the impression that his meeting with the Senegalese Ambassador had occurred sometime during the August/October 2005 border and transport dispute between The Gambia and Senegal. END COMMENT) Jasseh indicated that he was subsequently called by a Senegalese who identified himself as Pap Seck and stated that he was calling to establish contact and would be back in touch. When Jasseh informed Cham of Seck's call, the former said that Seck was possibly a Senegalese Military Intelligence Officer and that he would provide money to Cham; when Jasseh asked about the purpose of the money, Cham responded that it would be paid to Gambian officers as compensation for not being allowed to serve in a post-coup government that Cham envisaged staffing with civilians only.

16. (SBU) Following Jasseh's statement, there was footage of other suspects, both military and civilian. In his statement, Captain Wassa Camara, former military police commander, recounted ringleader Cham's telling him of Senegalese support for the plot. According to Camara, Cham claimed that Senegalese troops in the Kaolack/Nioro area "would come through Farafenni (town in central Gambia and site of military barracks) and support us (those staging the coup) if necessary while the (Senegalese) troops in Casamance would

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take care of Kanilai (President Jammeh's native town)." Another suspect, Sargeant Major Alha Bah, recounted Cham's telling him that he had Senegalese support for his plot and that Cham "had asked his boys at Farafenni camp to allow the Senegalese soldiers to enter if it was necessary."

COMMENT

17. (C) Notwithstanding suspects' claims of Senegalese support for ringleader Cham's plot (including Jasseh's murky account of Senegalese financial support), we are not aware of a "smoking gun" to indicate clearly a Senegalese hand in the overthrow attempt. Nonetheless, we note, per ref a, Jammeh's reference in his March 24 statement, to "possible outside influence" surrounding the overthrow attempt and have no basis for ruling out Senegalese involvement of some sort. In any event, the extent of Dakar's cooperation in locating Cham and sending him back to The Gambia -- if indeed he remains in the Casamance region, as the GOTG believes -- should be a good indicator of possible fallout from the coup plot on the Senegalese/Gambian relationship. END COMMENT.

STAFFORD